

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 1820.

NO. 1.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

The following Letter from the Rev. Stephen R. Smith, inclosed the copy of a letter from Miss Thompson alluded to on page 200 of the first volume of the Messenger.

New-Hartford, (N. Y.) June 30, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

THE following letter was addressed to Mr. Waters, more than a year since; and the copy has been read with no small interest, by the numerous friends of the unassuming Miss Thompson. I have her permission to present you with the copy. Should you think, as we do, that it is calculated to call the attention of young ladies, who may have been induced to join themselves to particular religious establishments, without sufficient investigation; you will undoubtedly publish it. It is believed, that the copy is an exact transcript of the original; trifling deviations, however, may have occurred. * * * * * This is a loud "voice from the living," of the authenticity and genuineness of which, there is no doubt.

STEPHEN R. SMITH.

Copy of a Letter from Miss Pamela Thompson, to the Rev. John Waters,* Paris, (N. Y.)

REV. SIR,

I have had for some time, an intention of writing you a letter, containing some of the evidences for my believing in the so much despised doctrine of universal holiness and happiness. But have deferred writing from time to time, in order that I might have a better opportunity for searching the Scriptures more particularly, to see if these things were so. It is not my intention in writing this letter, to instruct, but to show you my faith, and the ground on which I stand, for I know of no one that stands in more need of instruction,

* Her former Pastor.

than your humble servant P.....a. I feel sensible of my own weakness and imperfections, and am determined to seek after wisdom, and shall greatly rejoice to find it, let it be found where it may; and moreover feeling it a duty, which I ought to discharge towards one, whom, I am willing to own as my spiritual guide and benefactor. I therefore shall endeavour to introduce some proof from Scripture and reason, which constitutes me a believer in the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness.

In the first place, permit me to state, that I cannot consistently believe that sin is an infinite evil. And shall now suggest some of my reasons, why—The word *infinite*, signifies endless, unlimited, unbounded. Finite man is not capable of doing an infinite deed, because his understanding is finite, and the law that he sins against, is only a shadow of the perfect law; and a law produced by the acquisition of finite knowledge, must be also *finite*. If *sin* is infinite, it must always remain, and Christ will never do, as the Scriptures say he will, that is, finish transgression and make an end of sin. We read in John, chap. i. ver. 29. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." If sin is infinite, it consequently must continue as long as God exists, and cannot be taken away and destroyed in the sense, the Scriptures say it will. We read also in Rom. chap. vi. ver. 23. "The wages of sin is *death*," compare this with the first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xv. verse 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is *death*." It appears plain, from the testimony of Scripture, that sin and its consequences, which are misery, will cease to exist.

In the second place, I believe sin and misery to be inseparably connected, and as long as we sin we shall be miserable, be that time longer or shorter. I believe that man, in a spiritual sense, was created in Christ the heavenly, and his body was formed in Adam the earthly; this idea will, I believe, be ad-

mitted by all. In 1 Cor. chap. xv. ver. 49. we read, "that, as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," verse 22, "As in Adam all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive." It is now reasonable to conclude, that, when we lay down this earthly nature, we shall then return to that source from whence we came. In consequence of our earthly nature and being, being made subject to vanity, we partook as Adam did, of forbidden fruit; and by that means, our minds became darkened and alienated from a knowledge of the true character of God. Mankind have formed very incorrect notions of their Maker. They have viewed God to be their enemy, and have endeavoured to do something, in order to reinstate themselves in the favour and friendship of God; these incorrect notions have, I believe, been imbibed by man, ever since the fall. I cannot believe that ever any change took place in the Deity, see Mal. chap. iii. ver. 6. "I am the Lord, I change not." I believe man is as much in the favour of God now, as he ever was. For to suppose that God will love sinners any better after they have become saints, is to presuppose a change in the Deity: neither can our sins in the least effect him, it is the individual himself, that receives according to his deeds, whether they be good or evil, see Job, chap. xxxv. ver. 6, 7, 8.

I shall now endeavour to show, what was the great object of our Saviour's mission into this world of sin, which I shall endeavour to prove by Scripture. In the first place, I shall state, that I believe, the great object was to commend, or manifest the Father's love to the human race, Rom. chap. v. ver. 8, 9. "But God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

And in another place, Christ himself tells the reason, or cause of his coming into the world. It reads thus, "For this cause came I into the world,

that I should bear testimony to the truth." I will now endeavour to prove by the Scriptures, what I conceive to be this truth, that Christ came to bear testimony to. I conceive it to be this, that "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Question, What if some do not believe that God has given them eternal life in Christ—shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?—Answer, "God forbid." Our belief of this, does not make the truth of it any more certain; neither does our unbelief make it any more uncertain. The thing to be believed must exist independent of our believing it. Our coming to the knowledge of this truth serves to happify our minds, and makes us rejoice in the blessings a God can bestow. A person that has long been in unbelief, his mind darkened, and alienated from the truth through ignorance, when he is once brought into this glorious truth, will he not exclaim in the language of Scripture, "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

In searching the Scriptures, I have found what proportion of faith Christ and his apostles required of new converts, which would constitute them believers in the apostolic churches. The simple proposition is thus expressed, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It appears, that through this simple belief, we have the communication of spiritual life. I would remark, that we must believe from the heart, and also from evidence. If we have no evidence, and at the same time, make this confession without feeling the force of it, we shall not be benefitted by other truths that grow out of it. If the received opinions of men are true, why did not our Saviour and his apostles require of new converts a belief in the doctrine of *endless misery*. It is often expressed in the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and that, the Father loved us to that degree, that he did not withhold his Son, but delivered him up for us all. God is represented as loving us before we loved him; and that, while we were dead in trespasses and sins.—And this love was the cause of Christ's dying for us. Rom. v. 8. "But God commendeth his love, &c. See also Eph. ii. 4, 5. "For God, who is rich in mercy for

his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ." 1 John iv. 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us," ver. 14, "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." If the salvation of the world, was the great object of our Saviour's mission; (then) for us to suppose that divine justice requires the endless misery of the world of mankind, is to make the justice of God, stand directly against the great object of Christ's mission. I believe a salvation that justice is engaged in, is a salvation from sin, it is turning away every one of us from our iniquities, and delivering us from the power of darkness.

I shall now endeavour to prove from Scripture, that grace will increase, and sin decrease to that degree, that sin, and its consequence, which is misery, will cease to exist and be no more known. That grace will obtain the victory and reign triumphant, and that in the fulness of time, all universal nature will be restored from mortality and sin, to a state of immortality and righteousness. I shall produce such passages of Scripture, as I think have a direct meaning in favour of the doctrine of universal salvation.

In the first place, I shall quote you to the 5th chap. of Rom. which is to be taken at large, see also Col. chap. i. ver. 20. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."—May we not with the fullest assurance, believe the promises of God made to Abraham? when he said, in thy seed, which is Christ, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. I think we may, for "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." A restitution of all things is spoken of in Acts iii. 20, 21. which reads thus, "And he shall send Jesus, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Can there be any more harm for me to believe in the doctrine of the restitution of all things, than it was for the prophets of old,—I think not.

I come now to a passage, that will give us some information, when the restitution of all things shall take place. Eph. i. 9, 10. "In the dispensation of the fulness of times," &c. The prophet David says in Ps. lxxii. 11. "Yea all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." verse 14. "He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence," verse 17. "And men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed." If all nations serve Christ, will they not be blessed in him according to the promise—I think they will. See also Ps. xxii. 27. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." I will now refer you to the 25th ch. of Isaiah, from the 6th to the end of the 8th verse, it is too lengthy to write at large.

I will now pass to Rev. xxi. 4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." If millions are to mourn to an endless eternity, I see no propriety in this passage. In 1 Cor. xv. 54. it reads thus, "So when this corruptible, shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—As we read, that Christ "gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time," I also believe, that when the "ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Then, at that period Christ will see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. O! transporting thought!

We may plainly see that the great work of reconciliation could not be finished, until Christ had subdued and reconciled all things to the Father. Well may the ransomed souls sing, "blessing and honour and glory and power, be unto him, that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

We may now see, that it is God's will, that all souls be finally holy and happy, and that, it was the intention of the Saviour's mission. I might still continue to quote Scripture, that is, concentrated in this grand point, for

there is no end to them ; but what has been already quoted, will, I think serve to prove the doctrine for which I contend.

Dear Sir, these are some of the evidences on which I ground my faith.—Here I remain feasting on the rich promises of Abraham's God, believing him faithful who has promised.

I submit what has been said, to your candour, earnestly praying that if I am in an error (as many suppose me to be,) that I might be convinced of it, and through the all-sufficient grace of God manifest in Christ, be brought to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. If I have written any thing that is not answered agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, it was not intended.—To know the truth is my main object. So far as I know my own heart, I think I feel willing at all times to leave an error, to embrace the truth. If, dear Sir, you will show me the propriety of the following queries, I will be no longer an Universalist ; I shall therefore take them from the several heads upon which I have given my ideas. I have in the first place argued some on the nature of sin. In the second place, I stated that as long as we sinned we should be miserable. In the third place, I endeavoured to show what was the object of Christ's coming into this world. In the fourth place, what profession of faith, Christ and his apostles required of new converts, at their reception into the churches, and in the fifth place, produced such passages of Scripture, as I thought had a direct meaning to the doctrine of universal salvation.

1. Will you shew me, the propriety in supposing that finite man can stand amenable to an infinite law? 2. Will you show me the propriety in supposing that sin and misery will continue to an endless eternity without making Christ's and his apostles' words* void, when they assert that sin shall have an end? 3. As you undoubtedly believe that Christ will accomplish the end he came for, will you show me the propriety in supposing that it was not his object to reconcile all things to God; bring every creature to a willing obedience, seek and save that which was lost, and in very deed be the Saviour of the world? 4. Will you show me

the propriety in supposing, that when an individual acknowledges and professes the worthy name of Christ, that they ought to be shut from the common privileges of Christians, because they cannot conscientiously subscribe to the article of endless misery? 5. Will you show me the propriety in supposing, that those who are gathered together in Christ, and have bowed the knee of adoration at the name of Jesus, and are made reconciled to God, through the peace made by the cross—shall finally be excluded from God, who is the reconciler of all things? If, dear Sir, you should object to what I have written, (which is no more than I expect,) and say that I have not said any thing about faith and repentance and forgiveness of sins, I am willing at any time to show what I conceive to be the nature of that salvation, which is dependent on the forgiveness of sins; and will now state that I do not believe, that we shall be saved from any punishment our crimes deserve; for we read that "God will render to every man according to his works." I ask, how far such a retribution consists with forgiveness, and how we are said to be forgiven while made subject to punishment. I think I must have exhausted your patience by this time. I have written more lengthy on this subject than I calculated when I began.

I close this letter, humbly hoping, that what I have feebly contended for, in God's own time will be effected; I look forward with strong expectations to that period, when the creature that was made subject to vanity, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I am, dear Sir, your
humble servant,
PAMELIA THOMPSON.

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, August 5, 1820.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

AT the commencement of the Second Volume of the Christian Messenger, the Editor feels it a duty, which is imposed by many valuable communications, to express his grateful acknow-

ledgments for those free-will-offerings, which have been devoted to enrich our columns with interesting, instructing, and edifying labours; and which have served in a good degree the essential interest which this work is designed to promote. To this most sincere tribute of gratitude he ventures to add his most respectful solicitation for a continuance of communications, as may suit the convenience of those whose former liberality has imposed so many obligations. He also feels particularly indebted to the *Universalist Magazine*, a work published in Boston, Massachusetts, and edited by the Rev. Hosea Ballou, for some very important, and perhaps the most valuable matter which will be found in the columns of the Messenger; and since it has been perceived that the copy right of that work is now secured to the publisher, Mr. Henry Bowen, he would ask it as a favour, and it is desirable to know whether we shall be indulged with the privilege, as heretofore, of making such selections as he may think proper from that valuable work? He would furthermore wish to have it distinctly understood, that this paper is open to receive the religious and moral sentiments of the virtuous and good of any denomination, and that it is solicitous of being the medium of open and free discussion, that thereby its utility to the public may be enlarged.

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

ON THE PERSON OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Much has been written in the first volume of the Christian Messenger on the person of Jesus Christ, and that question seems now to be pretty well settled, in so much so, that I have no disposition or wish to call it up again at present; but it may not be improper to examine the Scripture testimony concerning the supposed personality of the holy spirit, improperly rendered *ghost*, in the New Testament. I say improperly rendered; for the Saxon word GAST, from which the English *ghost* was taken, has nearly the same meaning as *ghastness* or *ghastliness*, i. e. horror of look! It also represented the superstitious notion of the appearance of a soul or spirit of man after death; hence their supposed ghastly appearance; a sense in which

* The words of Daniel.

the Greek word *πνευμα* is sometimes used, but whenever it is so used in the Scriptures, it is always rendered *spirit*, and not *ghost*. Luke xxiv. 39. "For *πνευμα*, a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." chap. viii. 55. "And her *πνευμα* spirit come again, and she rose straightway." Though in this last text, it must be admitted, that nothing more might have been meant than her *breath*, which is the primitive meaning of the Greek word. But whenever the word is connected with *αγιος*, *holy*, it cannot have this meaning; and therefore should have been rendered (as it is in the improved version, and Wakefield's translation,) "the holy spirit;" or, without the article, "a holy spirit;" as in Acts iv. 8. "Then Peter, filled with *πνευματος αγιου* a holy spirit, said unto them;" &c. Thus much for the meaning of the word; and now let us search for the propriety, or rather the impropriety, of considering it a *person*.

To say that Peter was filled with a holy *person* is nonsense; or to say that he was filled with THE holy person, unless that person be God the Father, ("the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," who "fillet all in all," Eph. i. 17—23.) is no better. But we shall now notice what we consider direct proof that *the holy spirit*, or words equivalent thereunto, except when they are used merely as another name for God, never signify a *person* or *being*, but always a power or influence of some person or being and may be applied either to the supernatural power and influence of God, or to the heavenly temper and disposition of a godly man. When it signifies any thing directly from God, we are to understand those miraculous powers by which Christ and his apostles wrought miracles, spake with tongues, &c. and when it signifies any thing belonging to man, we are to understand thereby, that heavenly temper and disposition which shone so conspicuously in Christ and his apostles. The evidence alluded to above, which I conceive to be directly in point, and which I do not recollect to have seen noticed by others, is the use of the pronouns, both personal and relative, which are connected with the Comfortor (advocate) or Holy Ghost, John xiv. 16. The pronouns in rela-

tion to God, or any word signifying the same as God, are always in the masculine gender,* but, in relation to the Holy Ghost, in the passage above mentioned, where, if ever, the third person of the trinity is spoken of, the pronouns, both personal and relative, are all in the neuter gender. Persons are always either masculine or feminine, but never neuter, unless in speaking of a mere child, whose sex may not be known. Neuter pronouns, therefore, always relate to properties and things, but never to persons. Now we find this rule observed in the New Testament, and the language is just what we should expect if the holy spirit be not a person; and directly contrary to what we should expect if the holy spirit be a person. The translators have taken care to have these words begun with *capitals*, so that in the sight of the eye, as well as in the hearing of the ear, they might have some weight on the understanding; but this is without any authority, and without the least propriety. All such influence, as far as it goes, is calculated to deceive.

Jesus saith, John iv. 24. "God is *πνευμα* a spirit; and they that worship *αυτον* him, must worship in spirit and in truth." Here the personal pronoun is in the masculine gender; just as we should expect, and just as it always is in relation to God, to Jesus Christ or any other man. But in chap. xiv. 16. Jesus says, "I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another *παρηκλητον* advocate to continue with you to the *αιωνας* age; even the spirit of truth 'o which the world cannot receive, for (the world) discerneth *αυτο* it not, neither knoweth *αυτο* it; but ye will know *αυτο* it, for it shall abide with you, and will be in you." Here the pronouns, both the personal and the relative are in the neuter gender, 'o which, and *αυτο* it, just what we should expect, if by the *advocate* or *comforter*,

* It is possible some may think that the Lord's prayer will afford an exception to the above statement. "Our Father which art in heaven." But if any one will examine the text, they will find neither pronoun nor verb in it, but only the article 'o, agreeing with *Father* understood. *Πατερ ημων, ο εν τοις ουρανοις*, which I should render, literally, "Our Father, (the Father in the heavens,) sanctified be thy name," &c. Or to drop the article, as it is frequently done, "Our Father in heaven," &c. This contains all that is expressed, and without being obliged to supply a verb which is not in the original.

we are to understand the power of working miracles; but if the advocate were a person, it would have been written *ον whom*, and *αυτον him*.

In verse 24th Jesus says, "And 'o λογος ον ακουετε the word whom ye hear, is not mine," &c. Here the relative *ον whom* is used, which properly enough in this place, is rendered *which*; but it will be recollected that John calls Jesus 'o λογος the word, in the first chapter of his gospel, and therefore it is not strange that this word should be personified here. But in verses 25, and 26, Jesus says, "Thus far have I spoken to you, whilst I continue with you: but *οστις* that holy spirit, the advocate, 'o which the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and remind you of whatsoever I have told you." see Wakefield. In the common translation, the demonstrative pronoun *οστις* that, is rendered *he*, and the neuter relative, 'o which, is rendered by the masculine *whom*; and for what; but to make out that this advocate was a person, and of course the third person in the trinity?

K.

Concluded in our next.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"HURON" is received; and while we discover considerable poetic fire in his "Triplet," and which probably would be unanswerable by those for whom it is intended, yet it contains one or two ideas which will hardly bear examination. Of whom did Christ purchase salvation? How did he purchase it "on the tree?" What was the price paid? And who received the satisfaction? Again. If it is the will of God, that all men shall be saved, what does "Huron" mean by "an endless grave?" Can that be endless which is to be destroyed? And unless death and the grave are destroyed, how can all men be saved?

Although we purpose to keep the two volumes distinct, yet as we have a piece in answer to "A Christian," which was excluded from the first volume for want of room, we shall give it a place in our next.

PRINTING

Neatly executed at this Office.